The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The Springtime Story.

As little children gather round their mother,
And beg her a familiar tale to tell,
One that is dearer far than any other,
Because so often heard, and known so well.

And as they watch her, prompting should she falter,
And any variation quickly see,
And cry, "Don't tell it so, don't change and alter:
We want it just the way it used to be."

So do we come to thee, O Nature,—Mother,—
And never tire of listening to thy tales,
Tell us thy Springtime story now,—no other,
That hath a wondrous charm, which never fails.

Tell it with all the old-time strength and glory,
Tell it with many a happy song and shout;
Don't miss one bird or blossom in the story,
Don't leave one daffodil or daisy out.

Tell us each shade n all the rees' soft greening,
Don't skip one blade of grass, one bee, one wren,
Each little thing has grown so full of meaning
In the dear story we would hear again.

O Mother Nature, thou art old and hoary,
And wonderful and strange things thou canst tell;
But we, like children, love the Springtime story,
And think it best, because we know it well.

BESSIE CHANDLER.

The Labourer's Bondage and Resurrection.

PREACHED ON EASTER SUNDAY, 1894, BY THE REV. STOPFORD BROOKE.

[*Revised for* THE SEED SOWER *by Mr. Brooke.*]

EXODUS ix., 1: "Let my people go that they may serve me."

I think I need scarcely enter here into the historical criticism of the story of the Exodus. I have done so already at other times. It may suffice to say that the tribe of the "Sons of Israel" did live, after their patriarchal life in Canaan, in Egypt; that there they multiplied, and with other dependent tribes, and the peasants of Egypt as well, were greatly oppressed by the ruling classes, and chiefly in the great building and canal operations which were carried out by Rameses II. and his successor; that they revolted and fled over the isthmus of Suez into the peninsula of Sinai, where they wandered until they broke upon the Canaanitish tribes, and finally grew into a nation. That is really all we know with any historical certainty. The very existence of Moses has been doubted. He has been made into a mythical personage, but to my mind without any good grounds at all. I think he is as real as the Exodus itself. But an immense wardrobe of the garments of myth and legend was made wherewith to clothe the event of the Exodus, and the figure of Moses. Poet after poet, patriot after patriot, story teller after story teller took up the old tale. What happened to Arthur of Britain happened to the

Moses of Israel, and finally, just as Malory recast into one tale the varied adventures of Arthur and his knights, so some one writer, 400, 500 or 600 years after the Exodus, threw the various legends of Moses and his chief men into a single story, which afterwards underwent still further changes, additions, and priestly and prophetic editings. At last it was secured in the form in which we possess it in the Bible. When, then, we preach on it we do not preach upon it as a true history; we preach on it as a story, as we should preach on any other of those great stories which, though not history, are full of more important lessons and interest to mankind than any history whatever. They are poetry, and contain all the powers of poetry, all the humanity of poetry. They have also an historical value of their own, and a most important one. They make quite clear to us the temper of mind, the manners, the thoughts, the emotions, the faiths, and the conscientious position of the society for which (and in which) the stories were composed. The writers reflected in their tale their own beliefs and those of their nation. We have not, then, in this story a true history of Moses and the Exodus, but we have a true picture of what the best men of Israel in the hour of their imagination thought and believed some centuries after the Exodus. And this picture is deliberately religious in aim. It tells us then not only what the Israelities thought at that date about human affairs, but about divine affairs, and this has the greatest possible interest for us. We have here the national epic of Israel, and it is a religious epic. Moses is its hero. It begins with God appearing to Moses in the bush on Sinai. It ends with God burying Moses on the mountain of Moab. We take to-day one moment in the first great crisis in the tale in this Exodus—this resurrection of a people—linked as it is to the story of our Easter by the long traditions of the Church of Christ.

What are some of its lessons for our modern life, that is, what are the human elements in the story, and what their analogies to-day in State and Church? Well, first we have a picture, and I dare say a true one, of Egyptian society—a great king, great nobles, a powerful priesthood mixed up with the State, a body of rich and comfortable citizens and tradesmen, a huge and complicated society; and below a multitude of peasants and slaves and poor folk, who were used by the upper classes to do their work and to minister to their luxury, who were always in complaint, sometimes in revolt, and who were fearfully punished if they revolted, and driven to harder labour if they complained. "Ye are idle, ye are idle," was then the cry, "unthrifty dogs. Double their burdens, keep them down. Give them no straw for their bricks; let them find it for themselves, and exact the same tale of bricks from them." This was the fate of the working peasants of Egypt, and it has been their fate from generation to generation. But the matter became complicated somewhat when the same fate was imposed on a free tribe of strangers, whom the King of Egypt chose to degrade to the status of slaves because they had multiplied too much for the safety of society. The leaders of these strangers, who had the old instinct of freedom, would not endure this slavery, and broke away from it. Though the most of them were afraid, even degraded by their oppression, they had the courage to follow their leaders. A courage the Egyptian peasant had not.

This was some thousands of years ago, and yet, save for the mere name of slave, how thoroughly modern it sounds. We have got rid of the lash and the mines, and the power of life and death over the slave and the worker; but the thing itself is never far away from us. There has been a certain minishment of it within the last 100 years; but towards the end of the last century, things in France and Austria, and even England, were, practically speaking, almost as bad as they were in Egypt. Society—the institution of slavery excepted—was built on the same lines as it was in Egypt; and even to this day the lines on which our society is built are much the same. They are slowly changing, and changing for the better; but if we compare our modern world with the conception of the kingdom, of the society, which Christ desired, the difference between the society of the Pharaohs and of London to-day is, face to face with that comparison, small indeed.

What does this book say concerning this matter? What did the Jews who wrote this Exodus tale think about it? All our society takes this book as its guide. These Exodus chapters are read in every church in England at

this time of the year. Have they ever been applied by society to its own conditions? Had society ever thought what they mean? The conception of their writers is this: That when any society such as this exists, which uses up the labour of the peasant and the mechanic for its luxury and to increase its wealth, and drives them to overwhelming labour, whether as of old, by the lash, or as now for the support of social conditions which impose starvation on those who rebel or complain God himself is at war with it, and is at the head of the revolt against it; that it is He who sends the leaders to protest against its oppression; that it is He who plagues the luxurious society with all its woes and dangers; that it is He who, with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, delivers the people, whose affliction he has seen, and who cries in the ears of those who make their power and their wealth out of the overwhelming labour of the poor, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."

Let modern society look to it, not only here in England—where men, I honestly think, are thinking and caring more than elsewhere for this matter, but not as yet enough—but all over the civilised world, in France, in Germany, and Austria, in Italy, and above all in America; for unless they do, unless they listen to the cry, "Let my people go, that they may serve me," plagues will fall upon them, and they shall know that a resurrection of the down-trodden means a destruction of the Egyptians. This is the teaching of this book. This is the lesson to States which the freedom-loving spirit of the Israelite has handed down to posterity, and bound up with the name of Jehovah. It sins by its violent and unloving spirit. A different way of doing the same thing belongs to the teaching of Jesus. But though the way is different the thing remains. Wherever there is oppression, wherever the conditions are the same or similar to those in Egypt, wherever Labour is unjustly weighted and unshared by all, wherever the poor are overdone, God sees their affliction in the end, and comes down to deliver. When the tale of bricks is doubled Moses comes; and it will depend entirely on the spirit of the more comfortable classes in society, on their conscience of the wrongs of their social system and on their efforts to cure them, whether they are saved so as by fire, or altogether swept away. There is no menace in the story; there is no menace in the statement that I make: it is a story which proclaims the moral law which rules the evolution of societies; it is a statement of that which is certain to be. Where *those* conditions are *this* will follow. The sanctions of the law of justice for nations take a long time to reach their full effect; but they are as sure as death. All history is full of this, and the punishment which is exacted is the precise result of the conditions. If these are fully iniquitous the society which permits them is blotted out; if they are not iniquitous, but tempered with just effort for remedy, that society is gently treated, warned, not overthrown. But the warning must be listened to, and its cry obeyed. We are beginning to understand this inevitableness of the moral law for nations, as well as for persons, in England, but we shall have to understand it far better than we do as yet. There is as yet no widespread or full conviction over the whole of society of the certainty of this law. If there were, citizens would live differently, feel differently, and never rest till the whole State was in as good health as an athlete is in every member of his body. Only then is a State moral, only then is a State religious. It were well if over the doors of the Home Office, over the doors of every municipal council, over the doors of every parish council and every vestry, there were written these ancient words—"Let my people go, that they may serve me." And when all the work was done, this work of God, the most religious work that can be done on earth, England would, as a State, know the meaning of Easter Day.

Secondly, the same things are true in the realm of religious history. When Jesus, like Moses, came into Palestine, he found the souls and minds of men as heavily burdened, as deeply enslaved, as the bodies of the Israelites in Egypt. The whole of the ceremonial law bore as bitterly on the religious lives of men as the building tasks did on the slaves of Pharaoh. "Ye bind on men's shoulders," said Jesus, "Burdens grievous to be borne." A multitude of doctrines concerning God, and the faiths of men, which limited God's love, and made religion difficult for most, and impossible for the publican and the outcast, enslaved the intellect, the

conscience, the reason, and the imagination of the Jews. Most of them had to make bricks without straw. It is not that the Pharisees and Scribes and the priests were worse among the Jews at this time than other ecclesiastics and their crew have been at other times in history. It is not that the spirit which slaughtered Christ in Jerusalem was confined to the priesthood of Israel. In the Church of Christ itself, from generation to generation, and at the present day, the iniquitous insistance on rites and ceremonies as necessary to salvation, and the doctrines which exclude any men from salvation, the condemnation in the name of God of the innocent, of those who think for themselves, of the unbeliever in fixed creeds; the pictures of a God of vengeance and injustice, the dreadful schemes of salvation which insult love in God, and paint human nature in the dyes of hell, have been worse far than any with which Jesus came into contact, and had he appeared among those who taught these views, he had been buried alive. Were he to appear now, and preach his faith among us, he would not be slain, but he would be despised and rejected of religious society. No, the Jewish priesthood were no worse than priesthoods, whether in Church or Dissent, have ever been. They have always oppressed the souls of men. They have always enslaved their conscience and their reason, and crushed the freedom of the life of the spirit. Good men have been many among them, but their organisations—with their love of power in sect and Church alike, and their creeds, which claim to be believed on peril of damnation; and their ceremonies, which are made to limit freedom of form; and their tradition of divine authority—these have made them the Pharaohs of the soul of man. And the Almighty Love who rules the world has seen again and again the affliction of his children, and has come down to deliver them. Moses has come again and again in the history of religion. Prophet after prophet has spoken, and delivered the soul of man. There has been exodus after exodus from this Egypt—overthrow after overthrow of the power of these Pharaohs.

Among all those who opposed Him none has been so great a deliverer as Jesus Christ. He spoke to the priests as Moses spoke before Pharaoh. He broke their ecclesiastical law. He dissolved the necessity of their ceremonies. He brought the gospel to the hearts of those whom they scorned and oppressed. Their enemies were His friends, their doctrines about God were His horror. Where they excluded, He accepted. Their whole organisation, and the power it exercised over the soul, He stood against, because it was against love, and they killed him for it. But what He taught did not die. There is nothing needed for salvation but the love of God and man. When that is in the heart, there is no need of creeds or ceremonies, or priests. There is no authority but that of love, and whoever loves is his own authority. God is the father of men, and all are equally His children. Let the child love his Divine Father, let the brother love his human brother, and they are independent of all creeds, and all opinions, and all ceremonies, and all churches, and all sects. That was the final conclusion of His teaching, and He brought it home to the religious oppressors of His day. He stood by the crushed and weary souls of men, and cried to their tyrants:—"Let My people go that they may serve the Father;" and with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm the spirit of man went forth into a free life. It was the resurrection of the soul of humanity—for the time. Yes, only for time; for the great Pharaohs of Formalism, and Creed-making, and Earthly power in a religious dress, closed in again on the world. But that great resurrection held in it the power of others, and each that has followed has been more free of the grave-clothes, and will be more and more free until the dawn of that great Easter Day, when the soul of man shall stand face to face with the Father alone, risen into an endless love. That day may not be so far away as we imagine, but yet it must sometimes seem to us as if we were still in Egypt, as if no deliverer from spiritual bondage had ever come to lead us out of captivity. When I think of all the poor and oppressed souls working out with pain and trouble their inner lives under the tyranny of their religious teachers, or rather under the tyranny of their creed—for the teachers suffer often as terribly as the taught—crushed to the very ground of their heart by the terrible image of their God, and of all He requires of them; told that unless they believe with their whole soul a string of doctrines

framed by the intellect alone in its austerest hour of scholastic logic, they will be lost; that unless they confess the necessity to salvation of certain rites and ceremonies, they can have no communion with God at all; terrified, even the best and gentlest of them, by the thought that God is watching for their fall and ready to pounce upon them; miserable with the idea that there is no certainty, that their final happiness with God is little better than a chance, for how do they know that their belief is quite right? Sometimes lost in questioning, sometimes distracted with doubt, sometimes despairing; and the better they are the more delicate in conscience, and the more spiritual in imagination the more tormented: no freedom in love, no peace. When I think of all this, the misery of the good makes me tremble with indignation against the theologies that have forgotten the deliverance of Jesus. I would to God that thousands would say, with the power of Moses and the mightier voice of Jesus, to the churches and sects which keep up these slaveries, and who do not believe that God is Love,—"Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go free that they may love Me."

Church Music.

A PAPER READ AT A MINISTERS' "FRATERNAL."

Nobody has yet been able to define the relation of music to the devotional spirit. Yet, if music be, as is often asserted, the language of emotion, then it must play a most important part in public worship. That the Quakers have developed a simple and beautiful type of Christian character, without music in worship, is nothing to the point, since the very sterility of the Quakers, in spite of the wide-spread esteem in which they are held, proves that their methods are not adapted to win the masses of the people. In all other churches music has always been recognised as foremost among the means and helps to devotion. Certainly there is no other artistic influence so soon touches the heart as music. The voice of the organ, or the anthem of the choir, or the swelling hymn of the great congregation, have often been a channel for the grace of God. What we cannot fully express in words, but only dimly feel, that music seems to say for us. It is the voice of our unshaped and unspoken prayers. A noble hymn quickens and expresses at the same time spiritual emotion. For music is a form of prayer as well as praise. Many of our hymns are as truly prayers as those offered by the minister, and in them the people use a Litany. I know no other auxiliary so important to worship. It is well that we should jealously guard the purity of spiritual worship. But the beautiful things of art have their rightful place in the temple. They are not opposed to spiritual worship, but are rather its expression and ministry. They are capable of abuse, but they have a high and most sacred usefulness. "What is falsely called a spiritual worship," says John Ruskin, "is an attempt to evolve and sustain devotion from isolated powers of the spirit that were never meant to stand alone. That God is a spirit has not hindered Him from shaping the vault of night and hanging it with stars, or from clothing the earth with its beauty. They are the works of His creativeness, the appeal of his beauty to our hearts." And of all the beautiful things of art music most readily lends itself to the offices of religion, and is most beneficial in its influence on the soul.

Church music is a form of art in which we English people are well off. The English hymn tunes are the noblest church melodies in the world, and the English cathedral service is a development purely national, and of the highest artistic value and deepest religious interest.

The music of public worship is no question with me of Congregation *versus* Choir. I am for both. I am for music, and plenty of it—simple, melodious, stately—in which the congregation can join, and I am for music to which the congregation shall listen. Only, if a good-balanced, well-trained choir is not possible, then the music should be exclusively congregational. A beautiful anthem, a noble uplifting chorus, a sweet, heart-taking melody, listened to, may be as much an act of worship as the hymn joined in. But it must be beautifully rendered. It must not jar on the musical ear. An anthem badly sung is peculiarly distressing, not to trained musicians only but to all who have the least feeling for music. It may be laid down as a rule that if solos and anthems cannot be really artistically sung they had better not be attempted at all. It is painful to go into some of our chapels and hear the too ambitious effort

to render Sullivan and Stainer to say nothing of Spohr and Mendelssohn.

The first thing in music, even when a thoroughly efficient choir is provided, is to further congregational singing. A congregation that really desires congregational singing can have it, if it will take sufficient trouble about it. It is not now as in the old days of Waite and Curwen, that the people have no musical culture. In most of our congregations there is a knowledge of music, especially among the young people—quite sufficient to secure good congregational singing, if the other conditions are right. Simple tunes, not too many in number, not to difficult in harmony, but with broad massive effects, is the first condition. Unfortunately, to get the tunes, a battle has often to be kept up with the organist. There is a class of tunes, mostly modern in origin, quite unsuited for congregational use. They may be called choir part-songs. Real congregational tunes, like Wesley's "Aurelia," or Dyke's "Hollingside," or Elvey's "Sharon," can be sung by everybody, and are far more effective than more elaborate compositions. Not long ago I was at a great service, a church filled with people drawn from all the district round—a congregation earnest, eager, devout. And we had to the first hymn a sort of Wagnerian effusion, each line a subtle and delicately-harmonised monotone, and I need not say that the eight singers in the organ gallery had it all to themselves. The dismay of the congregation was appalling. Not a soul could sing. It was enough to kill the whole service. And yet the organist, a most accomplished musician, had been particularly requested to chose for the occasion popular tunes!

Now the woman in scripture who had suffered many things from many physicians, was nothing to some of us who have suffered many things from many organists. The only remedy is in giving our ministers such a measure of musical training as shall qualify them to keep the direction of the whole service in their own hands. I know there is a popular theory among church committees that minister and organist are best kept apart, and that the organist is an autocrat who, in his own department is not to be interfered with. It is a fatal theory. It is a theory never allowed in a cathedral. The fact is public worship is a great work of art, and any given service should be all of a piece, with all its parts co-operant to one end, and therefore needing the direction of one mind. The tunes to be sung are as much the minister's business as the hymns. For my own part, I sometimes want a particular tune and the emotional effect that tune can produce, more than I want the particular hymn chosen for it; and often and often I don't want the sort of voluntary I know the organist will play unless he has a hint. I once preached a sermon on "Peace," and the organist followed with one of the martial choruses from Judas Maccabeus. Worse still was my plight when, after an earnest discourse, the organist started off with the *Habanera* from "Carmen!" A turn on the rack could not have been greater torture! My experience of organists is that nine out of ten never listen to the sermon, and have no idea of fitting in the music to the prevailing idea of the occasion so as to make an artistic whole. I know that interference must be with tact, consideration, and deference, but a minister has quite an inadequate sense of his duties as director of public worship who thinks, or at any rate acts, as if the music had nothing to do with him. Oh! the iniquities, not to say atrocities, of music in worship. On a beautiful summer Sunday evening, not long ago, it was my lot to be present at a service, when the concluding hymn was Adelaide Proctor's "The shadows of the evening hour." And that soft, tender, soothing hymn was actually sung by a large choir to Sullivan's jubilant "Noel." I suppose we could all relate similar painful, ludicrous experiences. The fact is while talking much about music in worship, we are not really in earnest, or we should never allow these incongruities. Too many of us think a tune is a tune, and there is an end of it, and minister and congregation resign themselves to a state of things which they suppose is inevitable. It is no such thing. The first secret of improvement is that the minister shall inform himself—shall get to know something of church music and its history, its schools, its scope—shall appreciate the immense emotional power which music might have upon a congregation, shall conceive of public worship as a distinct work of art, every service to be in itself harmonious, dominated by one conception, intended to produce a definite impression. It is

not enough that a capable organist should be engaged and a competent choir secured, and then leave the matter solely in their hands. Too many ministers are glad to be relieved of any responsibility for the music. So long as there is peace in the choir they are content. On the contrary, the minister should make the music of worship part of his care, and devote time and energy to it as a most potent auxiliary of his preaching. He should not be indifferent to the opening voluntary but think of it as the key-note of what is to follow. He should know the difference in the plane of feeling likely to be touched by a composition of the modern French organ school and a movement of Mendelssohn. He should not allow the concluding voluntary to strike a jarring note. He should see that words and tune make a perfect union, and are not an ill-assorted couple whom neither God nor mutual affinity have joined together. And he should be able on occasion, gently, courteously, but firmly, to restain the organist, even in the way he uses his instrument for giving expression to the hymn. Many organists lay on the expression as it were with a trowel, and it is either a blare or a whisper. The secret of expression is to consider the idea and sentiment of a verse or a hymn as a whole. It is fatal to attempt to give expression to particular words. Some organists fidget a tune to tatters by the attempt to emphasise individual words, altogether indifferent to the idea of the line or verse. An organist, sailing under a moderate pressure of canvass, sees the word "glory" in front of him, and pulls out every noisy stop in the instrument; but suddenly his eye catches the word "peace" occurring in the very next line. In a moment all the stops except a soft one in the swell are shut off—and that he calls playing with expression. The word "thunder" may crop up quite incidently, and immediately there is a growling and a roaring as if the foundations of the world were out of course; or some mention is made of birds, and there is a twittering with the flute stop in feeble imitation of the thrush's "careless rapture." Here are Newman's well-known lines:

"So long thy power hath led me, sure it still
Will lead me on."

I have known an organist put the trumpet stop on to the words "So long thy POWER hath led me," and then, seeing the word "*still*" approaching, drop down to a whisper. A child could have told him that "*still*" here does not mean quietness, nor "*power*" noise, and that the two lines set forth one idea. All this is the travesty of expression. It is not what you hear with a Stainer or a Barnby at the keyboard. Much of this would be prevented if the minister held his proper position in relation to the music of public worship. But to hold that position he must have knowledge, taste, discretion, tact. What is wanted in fact is not interference, but consultation and co-operation between the organ and the pulpit. Meanwhile it is worth while noticing that there is scarcely any good congregational singing, except where the minister has the necessary musical knowledge to stimulate, direct and restrain. My plea in fact is, that church music should form part of the curriculum of ministerial studies.

Historic Notes on Midland Churches.

No. VI.

WALSALL—OLD MEETING SOCIETY, STAFFORD STREET.

Ministers.

John Godley, here in 1710 and in 1715.	
James Warner, some years prior to death,	1741
John Dobson	1741-
J. Winter	
David Jones	-1762
Noah Jones	1762-1784
Ebenezer Beasley	1786-1789
Benjamin Davis	1789-1790
Thomas Moore	1790-1794
Thomas Bowen	1794-1818
Abraham Manley	1818-1822
Thomas Bowen	1823-1838
William McKean	1838-1845
James Cauty Smith	1851-1852
Edward Myers, F.G.S.	1852-1860
John Omer Squier	1861-1867
Chapel closed.	
William Wynn Robinson	1871-1875
Peter Dean...	1876-

Historic Note.

Had it not been for the notes carefully and laboriously collected by the late Mr. W. Whitehouse, who was for more than sixty years closely connected with Bridge Street Chapel,

Walsall, little would now be known respecting the early history of this, the oldest Nonconforming, society in the town, from which, in 1763, twenty-eight of the members and the two deacons seceded on doctrinal grounds, and built a new meeting house in a court in Dudley Street, which in 1791 gave place to the large chapel in Bridge Street.

The old meeting house, which would seat 400 persons, was built in "Bank Court," afterwards called "Cox's Yard," on the north side of High Street, near the top. The windows had heavy outside shutters, a sounding-board hung over the pulpit, and the pews, which were six feet high, had locks to the doors, whilst the pulpit had a curtain ready to be drawn before the preacher, and a door behind him leading on to the roof, to facilitate his escape should spies or informers intrude upon the service.

This meeting house was destroyed in one of the riots about 1710, during the reign of Queen Anne. The Rev. John Godley, who was minister at this time, harangued the mob, and sought to dissuade them from their purpose. They assured him that, from personal respect, he should not be injured—a good testimony—and pressed him earnestly to depart, to avoid a scene they knew would be so painful to him.

The Old Meeting-house was rebuilt in 1715, and appears to have been again damaged during the stormy scenes connected with the first visit of John Wesley to the town in May, 1743. Again in 1751 the chapel was partially pulled down by the mob, hounded on, there is too much reason to fear, by some in a higher walk of society, whose public position and office would have led us to expect better things from them. The rioters were tried at Stafford, but, for want of sufficient evidence, were only fined £10, and the chapel was ordered to be again rebuilt, but "*further from the parish church*"—an ominously significant injunction.

The congregation possessed a minister's house in Upper Rushall Street (devised to the trustees of the High Street Meeting House by Thomas Walker, 21st July, 1737), which was occupied by the Rev. James Warner. A certificate, signed by the Town Clerk of Quarter Sessions, on the 25th July, 1737, legalises this house as a public meeting house for the religious worship of Protestant Dissenters. From this we gather that an opposition toward his preaching was manifested by a portion of Warner's hearers, and he consequently withdrew and opened his house for worship.

Mr. Warner, who died in 1741, was one of the trustees and could not therefore be ejected from the house, and he held the trust deeds. However, the deeds were borrowed from Mr. Warner by a gentleman of considerable influence in the society, and he subsequently declined to return them. It would seem that the trustees elected the minister; and having now got the documents in their possession the majority elected the Rev. Noah Jones as minister, and in the following year, as before stated, the orthodox members seceded and formed another society.

The ministry of the Rev. Noah Jones was not altogether a happy one. The Rev. James Scott, of Cradley, in his M.S. book says:—"In September, 1762, Mr. Jones removed to Walsall by the desire and invitation of the majority of the Dissenters. This, he was soon convinced, was an error in conduct, for the factious party zealots in that town, who had before separated, in *the Rev. Mr. Winter's time*, after cavilling and finding fault about a year, erected a meeting house, and exerted themselves strenuously to support it. About this time Mr. Gervase Wild (first minister of Carr's Lane, Birmingham) came to Walsall and was one of the first who sounded the alarm of heresy." Mr. Jones, perceiving the discontent of the people, and the perfidy and unsteadiness of many who had signed his invitation "endeavoured to preserve a proper temper. Not wasting his time in fruitless complaints he vigorously applied himself to the composition of sermons, to his school, and to the perusal of a great variety of valuable authors, by which he acquired a much larger stock of knowledge and experience than he would have done if this division had not happened." He continued to officiate as long as he was able, "highly esteemed by his flock and much respected in the town," and resigned his post in 1784, being immediately succeeded by the Rev. Ebenezer Beasley. Mr. Jones died on 14th December, 1785, aged 60, and was interred in the "new burying ground, near Walsall, where a tomb covered with a plain flat stone was erected to his memory."

The present chapel, "sacred to the worship of the only true God," and "erected by the Old

Meeting Society," was opened on Friday, the 9th November, 1827, it being also the day of the "Monthly Meeting of Protestant Dissenting ministers of Warwickshire and neighbouring counties." Fourteen ministers from the district were present. In the morning the Rev. Alexander Paterson, of Stourbridge, conducted the devotional part of the service, the sermon being preached by the Rev. James Scott, of Cradley, founded on Psalm xxvi. v. 8:—"*Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*" This was the last sermon preached by Mr. Scott before his brother ministers, for he died on the 19th day of the following month, being seized with apoplexy, in the pulpit, in "the house" he had loved and served at Cradley for more than 38 years.

At the time of its erection the chapel was stated to be "in an eligible situation, no other place of worship being near, and accomodates 300 persons."

A debt long remained upon the chapel, it was cleared off by the exertions of the Rev. James Cauty Smith who, in 1851-2, visited Birmingham and other places in the district to enlist monetary aid. At that time many of the leading men of the congregation were engaged in the harness trade.

It is worthy of record that this congregation gave the Anti-Corn Law League its secretary—James Hickin. He was both a member of the society and a teacher in the Sunday school.

The congregation celebrated the jubilee of the building of the present chapel in October, 1875; on which occasion a sermon was preached by the Rev. Peter Dean from I. Samuel vii., verse 12, "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*"

In 1893 the building was thoroughly renovated, both inside and outside, at a cost of nearly £100, all of which, save some £10, has been paid off.

The present minister takes a large share in the public life of Walsall. He has twice been elected a member of the School Board, and is sent, in conjunction with the Vicar of Walsall, to represent the Board at the meetings of the National Association of School Boards in London. Mr. Dean is also one of the Nonconforming chaplains of the local cemetery and a member of the monthly meeting of Walsall ministers.

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GEORGE EYRE EVANS,
Whitchurch in Salop.

(*Next Month Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.*)

"Marcella."

(MRS. HUMPHREY WARD'S NEW NOVEL.)

A new book from the authoress of "Robert Elsmere" and "David Grieve" is a pleasure many have been eagerly anticipating, and now that the hour has come for sitting down at the ample feast no one will be disappointed. "Marcella" is a noble book—admirably planned and admirably executed. It is the book of a true artist, at once subtle and bold, refined and daring, with a rare dramatic instinct, and an accurate ear for the felicities of language. Above all Mrs. Ward is an artist with a conscience. She takes herself and her art quite seriously and therein she does well. The novel for her is not simply an instrument for playing on æsthetic sensibilities, but for creating those moods and impressions which nourish in men a larger, saner, and diviner life. Bringing to the task many gifts, a poetic insight, a wide observation of human life, great stores of learning, broad and deep sympathies, an eye alike for the glory of the flower and the moving spectacle of human affairs, Mrs. Ward has impressed herself on her generation as an artist, able to influence nobly, and to kindle in men's hearts emotions which once stirred cannot rest till they take life in action.

The "Interview" with Mrs. Ward in the March *Seed Sower* will have prepared our readers for the announcement that "Marcella" is *not* a novel with a purpose. While it is

essentially a novel of our day, and palpitating with the actualities of social life, it does not, like "Robert Elsmere," seek to win a way for a particular conclusion. It deals, indeed, with the most pressing questions of our time, and two-thirds of the interest of the book is due to the relation of its character with sociological politics. Yet it cannot be said that Mrs. Ward takes a side or commits herself to any particular solution of sociological difficulties. What she does is to paint a picture on a great scale, and create certain indelible and vivid impressions. The picture is a very life-like representation of the forces, theories, doctrines, influences and passions which are struggling together in the modern world in the effort to find a way through the complicated problems of social and economic life to a true brotherhood. The impressions created are various. No one can read "Marcella" and ever again be quite satisfied with our orthodox social and economic theories; no one can read it and be satisfied to sit in ease, content, and luxury, amid so much desperate wrong and misery, and miss the nobility of any earnest effort for social amelioration. No one can read "Marcella" without pain and sorrow; no one can get up from its perusal without a deep and vivid impression of the need of social sympathy, and some new-created or re-quickened thought for social good.

Marcella, as she first appears before us, is a wild, sweet, impulsive, undisciplined character, conscious of power, and confident with more than the usual confidence of youth in her own plans for making the crooked straight. She is a democrat, a Socialist, a Fabian, and other dreadful things, yet she wins the love of an aristocrat, a Landowner and a Conservative. Here are the materials at once for conflicts and complications. *Marcella's* experiences, face to face with the wretched lot of the agricultural labourer, and in personal contact with the lowest slum-life of London, are a school in which she learns much. The scene in *Hunt's* cottage, at the hour the poacher pays the penalty of his crime on the gallows, can only be matched by the scene in "Adam Bede" of *Hetty* and *Dinah* in prison. The whole book in fact *lives*. The characters are not stage puppets, they breathe warm human breath; the blood flows in their veins: they are quick with vitality. *Lord Maxwell*, *Marcella's* parents, the peasants, the fribbles of good society, those typical London Socialists, *Anthony* and *Louis Craven*, *Wilkins* (the labour leader), are all portraits to the life—not indeed that the authoress has transferred actual personalities to her canvas, but that they are types we all have met. One exception, however, has been made. In *Hallin* everyone will recognise that fine spirit, pupil of Green of Oxford, Alfred Toynbee. To pourtray that beautiful soul has evidently been a labour of love. His death-bed is almost too touching. We cannot do better than close this imperfect notice of a most fascinating book than by letting *Hallin* point its moral. He is speaking to *Marcella*:—

"One little testimony let me bear! The last. We disappear one by one—into the dark—but each may throw his comrades a token before he goes. You have been in much trouble of mind and spirit—I have seen it. Take my poor witness. There is one clue, one only—*goodness—the surrendered will.* Everything is there—all faith—all religion—all hope for rich or poor. Whether we feel our way through consciously to the Will that asks our will—matters little. That Will we reach through duty and pain. It holds us in living—it—carries us in death. But our weakness and vagueness want help—want the human life and voice—to lean on—to drink from. We Christians—are orphans—without Christ! Then, again, what does it matter what we think—*about* him—if only we think—*of* him. In *one* such life are all mysteries and all knowledge."

Little by Little.

Little by little the world grows strong,
Fighting the battles of right and wrong.
Little by little the wrong gives way,
Little by little the right has sway,
Little by little all longing souls
Struggle up nearer the shining goals.

Little by little the great rocks grew,
Long, long ago, when the world was new.
Slowly and silently, stately and free,
Cities of coral under the sea,
Little by little are builded; while so
The new years come and the old years go.

Little by little all tasks are done,
So are the crowns of the faithful won,
So is the human life-course run,
So is heaven in our hearts begun.
Little by little the seeds we sow
Into a beautiful yield will grow.

Conference Notes.

The Fifth Triennial Conference has been in point of numbers and enthusiasm eminently successful. Manchester outdid itself in hospitality. We are not sure but that the best feature of these conferences is to be found in the social elements called into play,—old friendships renewed, new friendships formed, the flow of kindly feeling, the sense of comradeship, the interchange of opinions in the snuggery when the day's excitements are over, the speeches *not* given on a platform but in the *abandon* of conversation. Oh! that the readers of papers could hear the trenchant yet friendly criticisms of the smoking-room and the supper-table! But it is better they should not!

There was a hopefulness about the meetings which must have sent many a good brother back to his work with new strength for its demands and new patience for its discouragements. Many plain truths were spoken, and Mr. Bowie especially did not shrink from stating some unpleasant facts with regard to our churches. Yet there was a fine tone of strong encouragement about the conference as a whole. Everything seemed to say "Great is our opportunity: don't let it slip."

We cannot honestly say that the intellectual fare was of a remarkable quality. The papers were sensible, thoughtful, well prepared, and the discussions were excellently maintained, but there was an absence of "*lifting* power" as Professor Tyndall called it, an absence of the deep note of passion, the sacred fire of a great enthusiasm and of passionate conviction, which moves even to new sacrifices and on to higher levels. Once when Mr. Wickstead was speaking we came near to it, but for the most part we were decent and drab.

The two most noticeable papers were those of Mr. Hargrove on "The Churches and the Poor," and Mr. Bowie on "Our Missionary Duties and Opportunities." The discussion on Mr. Hargrove's paper was particularly frank and refreshing. It revealed the presence in our midst of contending ideals and great differences of opinions. But it was a distinct advance on the discussion at the previous conference on the same subject when Mr. Ben Tillett shocked the nerves of so many of our friends. We are afraid Mr. Trevor was right when he said that "Unitarianism is one of the most backward in religious forces of our time." It has less sympathy with the new conscience towards property and the problems of labour than any other of the great Dissenting churches. It is astonishing how much social, economic, and political Conservatism may go along with very advanced Liberalism in religion. The speeches of Mr. Peach, Mr. Trevor, and Mr. Wickstead created a distinct impression. No doubt to some minds it was a disturbing impression. But to be disturbed is often a first condition of salvation.

Mr. Bowie's estimate—and no man among us is so qualified to form a correct one—that, out of our 350 churches, only about fifty are powerful and active forces in the moral and religious life of the districts where they are placed, must have been very startling to the easy-going optimists who persist in thinking that all is well with us, and who resent any suggestion that we might learn something from other denominations. Perhaps the statement that there are fifty of our churches that might be closed to-morrow and nobody a penny the worse, is not more than might be expected when the great changes in social condition and the enormous transfer of population from the country to the towns are taken into account. We agree with Mr. Bowie in the folly of spending money in keeping places artificially alive, that have only a name to live and are dead. It is true that the tendencies of the times are with us, but unfortunately the "tendencies of the times" don't reach many places which are left to decay by the forces of life having taken another direction. If we want to make any advance at all we must concentrate our energies on the great centres of population.

We wish our friends would take to heart Mr. Bowie's wise words that "views," conservative or advanced, hold quite a subordinate place in the problems of success and decay. Decay is often due to natural causes which no efforts of ours can arrest. Not the angel Gabriel himself could revive some of our churches. On the

other hand, wherever a church is strong and successful the secret is always in hard work, downright earnestness, a devout consecration of time and faculty to one end, a contagious piety, an undaunted enthusiasm. "Views" have little to do with the matter. Failures and successes are found in equal proportions among the advanced and conservative alike.

The least satisfactory of the papers and discussions was that on "Our Colleges." No one really came to "grips" with the subject. We have built a beautiful cage at Oxford, with a plentiful supply of hemp seed and clear water, but we have no birds to put into it. If it were not that the Unitarian ministry is constantly recruited by converts from the orthodox pulpits the Unitarian churches would be in a sorry plight. How many of the fifty powerful and active churches mentioned by Mr. Bowie are manned by outsiders? Mr. Rawson seemed to regard the presence of these outsiders as a reproach, and half hinted that their room was better than their company. But who are the outsiders? It is sufficient to mention Stopford Brooke, Page Hopps, Hargrove, Frank Walters, W. E. Addis, to show how much our churches owe to the presence of men who come into them free from stereotyped traditions, and bringing with them unwonted breezes from other spheres. The denomination owes a great deal of whatever vitality it has to the constant infusion of new blood, and it will not be a good day for us when we cease to make converts.

At the same time the duty is binding upon us to train a capable ministry ourselves for our churches, and we must look to our colleges to supply the main stream of ministerial succession. The serious thing is not that an occasional convert takes a pulpit, but that we are not keeping up our proportion of home-grown candidates. The "rolls" of our colleges become shorter and shorter. Fewer and fewer qualified men apply for admission. The sons of our well-to-do families once entered the ministry in numbers; now they are noticeable by their absence. The tradition which sent, as a matter of course, a minister's son to college, is now a tradition only. There are no recruits. Why?

It is something to remember that the difficulty is not peculiar to ourselves. And if it does not help us to row our own boat any the better because other boats are in the same plight, it does point to some general causes for which Unitarians are not specially responsible? How long and loudly have Bishops been complaining that suitable candidates do not present themselves for ordination? What does the presence of "literates" mean in the Episcopal Church, but that the best University men cannot be persuaded to enter the ministry? What orthodox Dissenting College is full? These facts point to something in the air, something in the spirit of the times, something in the modern tone of thought, something in the attitude of the educated mind towards religion, which prevails generally to keep men out of the Christian ministry.

It may easily be indifference, or scepticism. It may just as easily be a greater seriousness which forbids men to take up with the ministry as a *mere* profession where no sacred call is felt. Some motives which once played their part in making the ministry a desirable profession happily no longer exist. No one would enter it now for the sake of social status, or for the sake of literary leisure. These and other general causes affecting the ministry of all churches alike are surely worth consideration. But we do not find that the Conference touched upon them.

Perhaps it was considered more profitable to consider the causes peculiar to ourselves? But were these really seized upon? We think not. One was mentioned,—only to be passed by as really of no account. And yet we are convinced that the economic position of our ministry has really a great deal to do with the lack of candidates for our colleges. It is well to put pecuniary matters in the second place and to speak of "the nobler attractions of a spiritual calling," but what heart has a minister for his spiritual calling, when, not by the most rigid economy, can he keep the wolf from his door, and when he lives and works under the shadow of a coming old age for which he can make no provision and when he will be dependent on others? Laymen have no right to call

upon ministers to make sacrifices for which they are not prepared themselves. Spiritual calling or no, the labourer is worthy of his hire. What is a "living wage" for the ministry? It has been our lot to come across more than one young man who has said, "I should like to devote myself to the ministry, but the chances are I shall never be able to place the woman I love in a home suitable for her. I must go into business, and it may be life in business and in the world and with more adequate means will enable me to serve God and man as well there as in the pulpit." Mr. Rawson points to the fact that the majority of barristers are as ill-paid as our ministers, and that all the professions are overstocked with men, many of whom never rise above a clerk's salary. Yes, but the poverty of the ministtry is not due to the fact that it is overstocked, and there is an enormous difference between other professions and this—that the Unitarian ministry *has no prizes*!—We have no Judgeships, no Registrarships, no Canonries, no Deaneries, no possibility for any one of more than a decent living. Ours is one of the poorest paid ministries among English Churches. It is said that our highest salaries do not in any case exceed £600, whereas in Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches they run up to £1000 and £1200 a year. No, the economic position is not the first and weightiest thing to be considered, but it is of more importance than Mr. Rawson appears to think.

Among the special, although minor, reasons operating to keep our young men out of the ministry, are the social and official disabilities too often imposed on ministers. A system has grown up of excluding the minister from all part in church management; he has no voice in the councils of the church; he is not a member of the church committee; he attends congregational meetings only by invitation:—all of which is like excluding the paid director of a company from the directors' meetings. We hear of prominent ministers who, when they wish to consult their committee, have to put the matter in writing and send it to the secretary; of Sunday schools closed without consultation with the minister; and of many petty slights and indignities to which ministers are subject. It is a matter difficult to discuss in public, but that it is a sore grievance we know quite well. How many a minister's wife have we heard say in view of the treatment her husband has received, "no son of mine shall be a minister if I can help it." In no other church are ministers shown so little consideration and confidence. The rich man's son observes how his father's minister is treated—how more respect is shown to the vicar of the parish than to the minister of the chapel, and unconsciously he takes the object-lesson to heart.

Yet we have not reached the root of the matter. There would not be this lack of candidates for the ministry were the religious life of our churches thoroughly healthy, were we alive with the sanctities of faith, did our piety strike a deeper note, did our hearts burn within us before the majesty, the beauty, the imperative of immortal thoughts and hopes. "Spiritual Vitality at a low ebb"—we fear would be the diagnosis of the situation if some heavenly visitant were asked to tell us what is the matter. Our greatest need, more than money, more than machinery, more than scholarship, is the revival of spiritual life, a life lived more closely in contact with the Fountain of Life, that in devout and constant communion with Him, our empty vessels may be replenished. There would be no lack of gifts and no lack of service were we aflame with love and zeal for the gospel committed to us. We need to repent the coldness of our devotion, the cowardice of our faith. Young and beautiful souls will not be wanting for the ministry where churches are apparelled in the celestial light of holiness and love.

THERE was never a man on earth who was so mean, so contemptible, so insignificant, who was not worthy of being the possesor of a soul, and who could not be made to see the beauties of God by the attention of some minister of God. . . . Life is service. Service is a part of life: it is the only real human life, and from Christ's own existence we see the great example of it.—*Bishop Brooks.*

THERE is no true liberty nor real joy save in the fear of God with a good conscience.—*E. T. Clupp.*

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

In the Children's Hospital.

Here are four true little stories from the Hospital for Children in Birmingham. The Hospital contains 74 beds. Some of these beds are called "Sunday School Cots," being maintained out of funds contributed by the Sunday School children every year. When the Children's Hospital Sunday comes round, will not our little readers think of the poor, weak, and suffering children for whose benefit the Hospital exists?

I.—The Little Red Angels.

Was the child going mad? In the bedroom of a small two-roomed house, an anxious mother sat by a six-year-old boy. Hot and restless, the child had been tossing from side to side, but suddenly he sat up, and said, "Mother, I want to go where the little red angels are." What did the child mean? Was he dreaming, or was his brain giving way? No, the boy was clear-headed enough. He had often passed along Broad Street and had looked through the railings at the children in their red bed jackets in the lower wards of the Children's Hospital, and now he too wanted to go there to be made well. Happy boy! his wish was easily granted; he was taken into the Hospital, and soon was well and running about with his playmates.

II.—Little Nell.

"I'se *so* tired, but I'se *so* comfy," said little Nell, as she nestled down in her bed. Father and mother sat on each side of the bedstead, and nurse stepped softly about the ward. All that could be done had been done, and the parents had come to be with their darling to the last.

Their home was a respectable one, but there were five other children to see to, and both father and mother were glad for their Nell to find in the Children's Hospital the care and attention which they could not give. The doctors' skill had taken away the pain, the nurse's only charge had been to make all soft for the tired little frame—and then, "so comfy," the little one sank into eternal rest. The sorrowing father left this message: "His thanks and duty to all who had done so much for his child and him."

III.—His Waistcoat Buttons.

A warm June afternoon, and the people in Broad Street watched a group of four children following the Children's Hospital porter. Such children! such sunburnt, healthy, happy faces! They had come to the Hospital ill, and weak, and white; and after the doctor's medicine they had been sent into the country. The change in all was so great that their parents hardly knew them again.

The youngest had grown so plump that his greeting was, "I say, Daddy, I'se busted all my buttons!" And indeed he had, and nurse had to sew on tapes to tie his little waistcoat round him.

IV.—One-Legged Rosie's Gift.

The ward was very bright, but still. Father Christmas had been round to each bed, and, in happy awe, each little one had received a gift direct from the old man's hands. Each face was turned to watch him leave the ward, when little one-legged Rosie cried out, "Father Christmas, come back a minute, I want's yer." The nurses wondered what the child wanted; and as the old man stood by her again, she said, "Father Christmas, I do love people who's kind to us, and here's a penny for you." Her little heart was full, and gratitude for her new riches, over-flowing, sought no other outlet than this act of charity.

The Children's Service.

The church bells for service are ringing,
The father and mother have gone;
And three little golden-haired children
Are left in the doorway alone.

For these are too young for the meeting,—
The busy and frolicsome elves—
So they think to praise God like their elders
With a holy time all to themselves.

Each one a big volume has taken,
And holds it, top down, 'gainst the breast;
Forthwith the devout little ninnies
Sing out in their loudest and best.

They know not themselves what they're singing,
And each takes a tune of his own,
Sing on, O, ye children, your voices
Are heard at the heavenly throne!

Sing on: there is trust in your music;
The Father, he asks not for more;
Quick flieth the heart that is sinless
Like a dove to the heavenly door.

Sing on: we sing who are older,
Yet little we too, understand;
And our Bibles, how often we hold them,
The bottom-side up in our hand!

Sing on: in the songs of our service;
We follow each note of the card;
But, alas, in our strife with each other
How oft is the melody marred?

Sing on: for earth's loftiest music,
Though ever so fine and so clear,
What is it? The lisping of children,—
A breath in the Infinite ear.

F. L. Hosmer.

News from the Field.

BANBURY.—On Tuesday evening, March 20th, the young people of the Sunday School gave an excellent entertainment in the School Room, consisting of recitations, readings and songs, and two good and amusing dialogues. The whole of the items on the programme were well gone through, and the audience testified their approbation by hearty applause from time to time.—On Easter Sunday, Dr. Tyssen, of London, Acting Trustee of the Chapel, paid his annual visit to Banbury; and at the conclusion of the evening devotional service gave a very full and interesting lecture, "On the Fixing of Easter," giving an account of the origin and history of the present rule for fixing Easter time—he arguing and showing that it ought to be fixed in the middle of April as a definite thing. At the close, thanks were accorded to the Dr. for his lecture, after which a hymn was sung, and benediction pronounced by the minister. There was a good number of strangers present at the service.

BIRMINGHAM. — HURST STREET MISSION. — The Annual Sermons were preached at the Church of the Messiah on Sunday, April 15th, by the Rev. W. Binns. The Annual Meeting was held at the Mission Hall on the following day. The Mayor (Alderman Johnson) presided, and in addition to the Mayoress, Mr. W. J. Clarke (missionary), Mr. F. S. Bolton, and the Rev. W. Binns were amongst a large attendance.—The report of the committee testified to the continued success of the mission during the year. In addition to the ordinary work, Mr. Clarke had organised and developed a scheme for the clothing of ragged waifs and strays in co-operation with the chief of police. All the numerous branches of the mission had contributed their fair share towards raising the institution to the high position it now occupied amongst the philanthropic organisations of the city. The committee appealed for increased funds, for which there was still great need.—The Sunday School Teachers' Society reported that the average number of junior scholars on the books for the year was—girls 140, boys 143. The average number of scholars on the books, including adults was 547.—The Ladies' Committee presented a report of satisfactory work.—Mr. W. J. Clarke, in his eighth report as missionary, stated that they might look back on the year's work with devout gratitude to God, and they might also derive from its contemplation an added measure of courage and hope in undertaking the duties and responsibilities of the future. At the chapel services the encouraging attendances had been fully maintained. He dealt with the work of the other branches of the mission, and said that a more hard-working and zealous body of assistants no one could hope to have; and never had there been more perfect harmony and goodwill pervading the mission. — The Mayor proposed that the reports be adopted, and expressed undiminished sympathy with and appreciation of the continued and faithful labours of the missionary, Mr. W. J. Clarke, and congratulated him on the completion of another year of thoroughly successful work. His Worship said he had been very much struck with the range and success of the work. Theirs was an all round institution. They had gone on the principle that where they found distress it must be relieved; and they recognised that it was useless to appeal to the intellect so long as a man suffered from hunger. He looked upon the Adult Sunday Morning Schools as amongst the most beneficial institutions of modern times, and the advice bureau in connection with the mission he regarded as of the greatest importance. He eulogised the services of Mr. Clarke, saying that they were beyond all praise.—The Rev. W. Binns seconded the motion, and said that after comparing the two domestic missions in Birmingham with similar institutions in other towns the former were the most satisfactory of any that he had seen.

KIDDERMINSTER.—The death of our old and honoured friend, Mr. George Haycock, has left a gap in the lives and affections of very numerous friends and relatives. His death was a surprise and a shock to everyone. He was apparently hale and hearty on Thursday, 22nd, and on Sunday evening, the 25th, he died of blood-poisoning, at the age of 72 years. His loss is sincerely lamented by a wide circle of friends; and to his family it is keen and intense, but he has left them the richest legacy of universal honour, esteem, and respect.

KINGSWOOD.—Evening classes have been held here during the winter months for the study of Latin, French, German, and Shorthand. Mr. E. R. Hotchkiss was the teacher of the German class, and Latin, French, and Shorthand were taught by Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. An examination has been held in Shorthand, and the following students gained certificates from the Phonetic Institute:—Miss Elizabeth Johnson, Mr. Frank H. Matthews, and Mr. Frank Cocks.

LYE, STOURBRIDGE.—Our friends at the Lye are issuing an appeal for funds to enlarge their school-room. There are 250 pupils attending the Sunday School, and many more might be admitted if there were room for them. Additional heating apparatus, etc., is also necessary, and an expenditure is contemplated of £300. Towards this amount the following contributions have been made: C. Cochrane, Esq., £25, A. W. Worthington, Esq., £5, Dr. Badley £5, A Friend 2s. 6d.—Further contributions will be very gladly received by the minister, the Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A.

WARWICK.—The Rev. J. Kirk Pike, formerly of Belfast, having intimated that he, though Liberal, is no longer a Unitarian, has retired from the temporary charge of this congregation. The Rev. Felix Taylor is to act as minister for a short time.

HE that will not permit his wealth to do any good to others while he is living prevents it from doing any good to himself when he is dead, and, by an egotism that is suicidal and has a double edge, cuts himself off from the truest pleasure here and the highest happiness hereafter. — *Colton.*

Midland Church Calendar for May.

ALCESTER: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. John Dale, Salford House. Service at 3 p.m.

ATHERSTONE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, of Tamworth. Service at 3 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM: Church of the Messiah, Broad Street,
Minister: Rev. James Crossley, 5, Wyndham Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Hurst Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. W. J. Clarke, 160, Pershore Road. Services: 10-15, 2-45, and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Fazeley Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. T. Pipe, 59, Great Brook Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Newhall Hill Church.
Minister: Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, 18, South Road, Handsworth. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Old Meeting Church.
Minister: Rev. Joseph Wood, 120, Gough Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Church of the Saviour.
Minister: Rev. J. C. Street, Bristol Road, Edgbaston. Services: 1 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: Small Heath, Little Green Lane Board School.
Service at 6-30 p.m.

BANBURY: Christchurch Chapel, Horse Fair.
Minister: Rev. H. Hill, 5, Crouch Street. Service: Evening, 6-30.

COSELEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry Eachus. Services: 11 and 6-30.

CRADLEY: Netherend Chapel.
Minister: Rev. A. E. O'Connor. Services 11 and 6-30.

DUDLEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. A. H. Shelley. Services: 11 and 6-30.

EVESHAM: Oak Street Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Rudolf Dories. Services: 11 and 6-30.

KIDDERMINSTER:
Minister: Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans. Services: 10-30 and 6-30.

KINGSWOOD: Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.
Minister: Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. Services: 11 and 6-30.

LOUGHBOROUGH: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. H. Haycock, Beacon Road. Services: 10-45 and 6-30.

OLDBURY: Unitarian Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry McKean, The Dingle, Oldbury. Services: 11 and 6-30.

SHREWSBURY: High Street Church.
Minister: Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., Claremont Hill. Services: 11 and 6-30.

STOURBRIDGE: Presbyterian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. A. W. Timmis. Services: 11 and 6-30.

TAMWORTH: Cole Hill Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, 17, Aldergate. Services: 11 and 6-30.

THE LYE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A. Service: 6-30.

WALSALL. Unitarian Free Church.
Minister: Rev. Peter Dean, 3, Sandwell Street. Services: 11-15 and 6-30.

WEST BROMWICH: Lodge Road Chapel.
Minister: Rev. John Harrison Jesson Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.

WHITCHURCH: Church of the Saviour, Highgate.
Minister: Rev. George Eyre Evans, 5, Mill Street. Services: 11, 2-15 for Children, 6-30.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Unity Church, Snow Hill.
Minister: Rev. L. G. Harris Crook, Oaklands Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.